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 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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TIGHTENING OF ISRAELI BLOCKADE

Developments in the Egyptian economic blockade of Israel were reported in three issues of az-Zaman as follows.

On 28 January 1953, it was reported in az-Zaman that when the Egyptian Regional Office for Boycotting Israel learned that a branch of the Bata Shoe Company in Nicosia, Cyprus, was selling merchandise made in Israel, it demanded that the Middle Eastern headquarters of the company in Cairo stop offering Israeli products, or it would be compelled to boycott the company. The director of the company complied, the paper said, by telegraphing the branch in Nicosia to stop selling such products and to stop any consignment that was on its way from Israel. He explained, according to az-Zaman, that the company's policy aimed at consistency with the general Arab sentiment, and that selling Israeli merchandise clashed with such a policy. The company's action was welcomed at the regional office, the paper said, because Egypt, "which has always been a good host to foreigners," feels that foreign companies must also obey the laws of hospitality, which are obligatory for friendly relations.

The 29 January 1953 issue of az-Zaman stated that in order to tighten the economic blockade around Israel, the boycotting committee had held a meeting the previous day under the chairmanship of Col. 'Abd al-Aziz Fatti, the supervisor general, to discuss the matter of companies whose foreign branches continue commercial relations with Israel. It was decided, according to the paper, to form a committee composed of Lt. Col. 'Ism al-Misri, head of the regional office; Mahmud Maytal, director of the Chamber of Commerce; Husayn Kamil of the financial and economic department in the Ministry of Finance; and Salah Abu Jabar of the economic department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This committee is to communicate with such companies and demand that they comply with the Egyptian government's policy of boycotting Israel, the paper said. The article also stated that it had been learned that most companies are preparing to cooperate with Egypt and the Arab countries.

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Az-Zaman reported on 30 January 1953 that Israel is greatly concerned with the blockade, "which is having far-reaching results and will greatly harm the Israeli economy;" and that Egyptian authorities in the Canal Zone are now engaged in stopping smuggling attempts to Israel by way of the Suez Canal. There are 60 steamers, mostly oil tankers, now included in the black list for such activity, and these ships are subject to special maritime laws designed for control of the Suez Canal, az-Zaman reported.

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